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SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 10 August 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA (9 AUGUST)

The CHAIRMAN: This meeting is dedicated to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa.

In 1981, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 9 August as the day commemorating the courageous and historic demonstration of South African women against the racist pass laws in 1956. Since then, this day has been observed annually. On behalf of the Special Committee, I should like to welcome and to thank you all for joining us in the observance of this solemn occasion.

The observance of this year's International Day has a particular importance. South African women continue to challenge openly the remaining structures of apartheid and, at the same time, direct their attention to the future when they - as equal partners with men - will be setting the stage for a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

In this context, I am very happy to welcome our South African guests, the representatives of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), Ms. Ruth Mompati and Ms. Ellen Mothopeng, who will address our meeting this morning.

I also have the pleasure of welcoming wholeheartedly a delegation of South African women who are currently visiting the United States at the invitation of the African American Institute and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Special Committee is grateful that you could afford to share time with us now and this afternoon, when we will have a panel discussion on the situation of women and children in South Africa, and the assistance the international community could provide to redress the consequences of years of deprivation under apartheid.

(The Chairman)

I also have personal pleasure in welcoming to our deliberations today a Cabinet Minister from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Minister of Internal Affairs, whose presence demonstrates the importance my country continues to attach to the struggle against apartheid in all its manifestations.

Allow me now to make a statement on this solemn occasion on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid.

We observe today, as we have done annually in recent years, the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa. This year marks the thirty-sixth year since South African women, in staking a claim to their fundamental rights and liberties, defied the authority of the racist Government in South Africa and challenged the pass laws that were one of the pillars of apartheid.

Today the pass laws are no more, but the majority of South African women are not yet free: they are not yet free to vote, not yet free to be voted for and not yet completely free to reside in domiciles of their choice and accept employment of their choice. For them, the struggle against apartheid continues, in spite of the positive progress made so far.

Today we honour South African women, who, in a very true sense, have been in the front line of the battle against apartheid. We salute their courage. Though they have been scarred, brutalized and humiliated, they have not wavered. Though they have known the anguish of lost husbands and lost children, of hunger, of homelessness and of infant mortality, they have held their heads up high and refused to have their dignity stripped from them. In the face of appalling socio-economic inequalities, they have remained steadfast in their positive role and contributions to nation-building.

(The Chairman)

Perhaps most importantly, they have remained the conscience of a nation ravaged by violence. Therefore, the international community must continue to make their concerns our collective concern.

The history of South African women is one of pain and frustration. No words can wipe out such human experience, suffered over many years. Still, our solidarity with them may offer them some help: the knowledge that they do not stand alone in their daily tribulations.

South African women are the anchor of stability of the South African labour force. In that capacity, they become not only a sustaining force, but also a vehicle for national growth and development. Today, along with past discriminations, along with homelessness and the population explosion, South African women face the added burden of drought and hunger, and of poor health care delivery compounded by the dangers of the growing epidemic of AIDS. These are all parts of the challenge confronting South African women; the challenge is daunting indeed. Our ability to mobilize resources will be of the greatest importance for South African women as, together, they can confront the many social problems that need to be urgently addressed in South Africa.

Even in new, democratic and non-racial South Africa, the legacies of apartheid will not disappear overnight: they will take time, wisdom and courage to address. The root of the problems has always been, and remains, the apartheid structure, system and policies, but a new constitution for a non-racial and democratic South Africa will lay the foundation for the emancipation of all South African women. That is indeed their right, which they have so long fought for and which will be essential for building a new society.

(The Chairman)

The task before us, therefore, is straightforward: our commitment and obligation is to help in every way possible to sustain South Africa's march towards a non-racial democracy; it is to help in bringing to an end the violence in that country; it is to help in redressing the socio-economic inequalities in South Africa. Our role as members of the international community is to offer South Africans the hand of friendship and of support, to share in their aspirations and to renew our solidarity with them in their efforts to build, together, a new society for all South Africans.

I now have the honour to invite Mr. Victor Batiouk, Vice-President of the General Assembly - who, we are delighted to note, is also a Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid - to make a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. BATIOUK (Vice-President of the General Assembly): At the request of the President of the General Assembly, I shall read out his statement, as follows:

"I am honoured to join the members of the Special Committee against Apartheid in this year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa. This year marks the thirty-sixth anniversary of the campaign by South African women against pass laws that violated their civil liberties. Though the pass laws have been repealed, we observe this day in the knowledge that South African women are yet to enjoy their full democratic rights.

"The International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa is today being observed against the background of profound anxieties arising out of the raging violence, and of the stalled political negotiations in South Africa. Women and children remain

(Mr. Batiouk, Vice-President of the General Assembly)

defenceless victims of violence. Additionally, the severe drought in the southern African subregion is putting many lives at risk and destroying the livelihoods of millions.

"In marking this day, it is only fitting that we should reaffirm our solidarity with the women of South Africa, who continue to bear a disproportionate part of the heavy burden resulting from the many decades of apartheid. The need to redress this long-standing regime of racism, deprivation and social injustice can never be overemphasized.

"Over the year, an international consensus has been forged that apartheid must not be allowed to last. In 1989, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa. The international community stands firmly behind efforts by all South Africans to bring apartheid to an end through a peaceful process of negotiations for a new, democratic and peaceful constitution. The international community fully supports Security Council resolution 765 (1992) in urging the South African authorities to take immediate measures to bring an effective end to the ongoing violence and to bring those responsible to justice.

"South African women continue to show their resolve to overcome apartheid. They have done so by their activism, their role in the recent mass action being a case worthy of special mention. Daily they show their scorn of the threat of violent death. However, even a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa, apartheid will have left deep scars. A new South Africa will have to devote substantial resources to redress the many serious economic and social inequalities. In this

(Mr. Batiouk, Vice-President of the General Assembly)

context, I wish to reiterate that the solidarity of the international community with the people of South Africa must encompass both political support and assistance in addressing socio-economic issues. Women's needs must be a priority in this development. Today's observance is a welcome opportunity for us in the international community to focus on this priority. It is also another opportunity to express the continuing sympathy shown over the years in the United Nations towards the plight and predicament of South African women, and an opportunity to express hope that the ongoing negotiations will result in a meaningful solution of the present crisis in South African society."

The CHAIRMAN: It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs, to read out a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Mr. JONAH (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs): I have the honour to read out the message of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa. The Secretary-General's message is as follows:

"It is gratifying to note that in their Declaration of Intent the parties to the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) have declared that the new Constitution of South Africa shall, among other things, ensure that South Africa will be a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist State. Equally encouraging is the fact that CODESA has established a Gender Advisory Committee to ensure that women's issues are given due consideration during the course of the negotiation process. Given this commitment by the participants in the CODESA process, it is my fervent hope that a non-racial, united and democratic South Africa will join the ranks of the many Member States that have acceded to the 1979 International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

"Economic and social inequalities in South Africa have been a product of the apartheid system. A new South Africa will have to deal with these problems with urgency. To address this important question, a United Nations seminar on the future role of ths United Nations system was held in Windhoek last May. It brought together several South African experts involved in social and economic analysis and policy planning and representatives of several United Nations offices and agencies. The issues of women, children and other vulnerable groups featured

(Mr. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs)

prominently in the discussions of the seminar, and the international community was called upon to provide immediate assistance to those groups.

"This afternoon, a panel will offer participants from South Africa and from United Nations offices and agencies an opportunity to follow up on this important issue.

"Nearly two months ago, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the People of South Africa, I expressed the hope that the people of South Africa would find the courage and strength to rise above the differences that have led to the current problems in the CODESA process.

"Recent events in South Africa have shown that the continued impasse in that process will have serious implications for the safety and welfare of the majority of South Africans. The level of violence and wanton killings is alarming. It is widely recognized that such violence, if not curbed, could lead to a total breakdown of law and order. It is therefore vital that South Africans find a way to move ahead again, together, to a new democratic and non-racial society. CODESA currently remains the only forum for a peaceful process leading to this outcome, and the United Nations fully supports that process.

"I am encouraged by the fact that since the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, in 1989, Member States have been unanimous in their resolve to promote and support the peace process in South Africa. In this spirit, the Security Council convened an emergency meeting on the

(Mr. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs)

situation in South Africa last month to discuss how the United Nations could assist in ending the violence and in getting the negotiation process back on track.

"Pursuant to the decision of the Security Council, I appointed Mr. Cyrus Vance as my Special Representative to South Africa. Mr. Vance returned last week from a two-week fact-finding mission to South Africa. On the basis of his findings, I have submitted a report to the Security Council which contains recommendations on ending the violence and facilitating a resumption of the CODESA prccess.

"At the request of the President of ANC, Mr. Nelson Mandela, and with the concurrence of the Government, I dispatched two weeks ago to South Africa United Nations staff to observe the mass action campaigns by anti-apartheid forces in South Africa. It is encouraging to note that the level of violence during the mass action was reported to be significantly lower than had been feared.

"The United Nations system is proud to have been at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid. It is ready to assist in any way possible in the emergence of a new South Africa, one that is united, non-racial and democratic and which promotes full respect for the rights of women."

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to invite Ms. Ruth Mompati, representative of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), to make a statement.

Ms. Mompati was ANC's representative to the Women's International Democratic Federation and to the United Kingdom. Currently, she is a member

(The Chairman)

of the National Executive Committee of ANC and Chairperson of the organization in the Northern Cape region. Ms. Mompati is also Executive member of the ANC Women's League and member of the organization's delegation to CODESA.

It is an honour and a privilege to welcome you here today.

Ms. MOMPATI (African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)): At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude for the honour and privilege granted to us to address the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid on this solemn occasion marking the International Day of Solidarity with Women in South Africa, also known as South African Women's Day. Yesterday, South African women of all races assembled at various centres in our country to share ideas and develop strategies around the pressing matter of the emancipation of women and their elevation to deserved places in the political and economic processes in society. They did so, together with all the men of conscience of our country, also within the context of the national liberation effort.

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

The lamentable situation of women in modern society receives great attention and has been well-documented in recent years. And no less a great institution as the United Nations also dedicates time and resources to sensitize humankind to the issue through declarations, conferences and promotion of the notion of affirmative action. Indeed, barely two weeks ago, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, during its substantive session of 1992, had occasion to deliberate on no less than four important reports, all of which reflected a serious and concerted effort on the part of the world body to realize the implementation of strategies designed for the advancement of women.

The women of South Africa are immensely gratified to note that in all these endeavours, the United Nations has lost no opportunity to place high on its agenda the plight of women under apartheid. The adoption on an annual basis by the Economic and Social Council of the draft resolution entitled "Women and children under apartheid" bears testimony to this fact. It is with that in mind that we would like to pay a special tribute to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, as well as to the Centre against Apartheid, for their invaluable support, and particularly for their tireless efforts in highlighting the plight of the millions of South African women who are daily subjected to apartheid tyranny.

Our organization, the African National Congress (ANC), has placed great emphasis on the need to prioritize the issue of women's rights with a view to redressing the historical injustice that has been exacerbated by apartheid. This the ANC does, convinced as it is that there can never be any true liberation and democracy without the emancipation of women.

This year 9 August bears a special significance. It falls within the context of epochal developments in the southern African region. In the

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

neighbouring States there is great expectation that the South Africa problem might at last be resolved sooner rather than later. A mood is abroad reflecting a desire to advance into an era of hope, peace and reconstruction. Yet developments inside South Africa point to growing tensions rather than disinterested rapprochement.

In the recent period, our continent has been rudely awakened to the complex scheming and machinations of the South African power establishment. At a time when the world was looking towards the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) as the long-awaited forum to facilitate a peaceful negotiated settlement, the Pretoria regime, true to form, seized the opportunity to scuttle the process by insisting on undemocratic measures. They demanded a constitutional entrenchment of mechanisms to ensure minority political privileges amounting to a veto power. They refused to agree to an elected constitution-making body - in favour of an unelected body - in the form of CODESA to perform the task of drafting a new democratic constitution; above all, they deliberately recast the universally acknowledged democratic principle of majority rule to imply "a winner-take-all" scenario, falsely accusing the ANC and its allies of harbouring party dictatorial ambitions.

Yet, if the truth be told, it is the Nationalist Party and its Government that from the outset embarked on an orchestrated campaign of skulduggery and intrigue. Pervaded with corruption and a history of racism and repression, the Government from the beginning of talks sought to stifle the democratic movement by promoting civil strife through the sponsoring of violence. To this end they have financed the activities of organizations opposed to the cause of the oppressed; they have created and continue to maintain hit squads; they have gone further by unleashing hordes of assassins against ordinary

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

citizens. This they have done with the express purpose of creating a climate of mistrust, instability and fear so as to deny the forces of change organizational space. The net result of these policies of the regime has been devastating. As ANC President Comrade Mandela pointed out to the Security Council on 15 June 1992, more than 11,000 women and children have died in the past five or six years and in the period from January to June this year close to 2,000 people have died. The situation became so intolerable that the ANC felt compelled to end its participation in the constitutional talks within the framework of CODESA and to sever all bilateral contacts with Pretoria. Through the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the ANC made an appeal for the intervention of the Security Council on the issue of violence.

This body will also recall that pursuant to Security Council resolution 765 (1992), the Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative to travel to South Africa. We appeal to the Security Council to move with great speed in considering the Secretary-General's report, so that it can in turn take firm and decisive action and thereby contribute towards the speedy end of one of South Africa's saddest chapters, namely violence.

Our organization and people have continuously called upon the international community to see through the machinations of De Klerk as he went from capital to capital seeking applause for a process into which he was forced through decades of unrelenting struggle.

In any event, whatever else might have happened in South Africa in the period following De Klerk's assumption of the stewardship of the apartheid State, the harsh reality that today stares millions of South Africans in the face is that apartheid is far from dead. On the contrary, the impact of the deteriorating situation in our country is being felt with greater intensity.

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

In spite of the pious pronouncements of good intentions by spokespersons of the regime, apartheid is very much in evidence in every facet of South African life. Vast disparities in the quality of life persist between blacks and whites. There is massive and growing unemployment among blacks - it is about 43 per cent of the work-force, as opposed to 4 per cent among whites; the average monthly income for blacks is R650 whilst that of whites is placed at R1,550. Sixteen million black people live below the poverty line. The hopelessness of the health and educational services among blacks has led to endemic unrest that has reached crisis proportions in these sectors. The situation of land-hunger and homelessness among black people has reached alarming levels. This situation has been further exacerbated by the drought that has afflicted southern Africa, threatening millions of people in the region with starvation and death.

All of this occurs amid numerous reports that this regime has sought to project itself as an agent of change and a paragon of perfection when it is in fact highly corrupt and scandal-ridden, where government departments continue to squander millions of taxpayers' money.

In order to appreciate the full impact of apartheid on the majority of the population, it is pertinent to make the point that those who are hardest hit by apartheid policies are women and children, and particularly women in the rural areas. Whilst many nations of the world invest in their future by ensuring the healthy development of their children, apartheid continues to create many orphans through violence and terror, and generally through policies of criminal neglect. It therefore comes as no surprise that South Africa remains one of only two countries in the world that have not deemed it necessary to sign the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

The oppressed women of South Africa, precisely because they have been forced to shoulder a greater share of the burden of apartheid, are increasingly becoming conscious of the fact that the road to their emancipation goes through the destruction of apartheid and the creation, in its place, of a non-racial, non-sexist democratic society.

On many occasions we have gone to international forums, as we are doing today here at the United Nations, to expose the real intentions of the regime. But precisely because of the euphoria generated by De Klerk's crusades abroad, it is imperative that people of conscience the world over should intensify their efforts to sustain pressure in order to compel the South African Government to act honourably and to engage in negotiations in good faith. The assassination, torture and mysterious disappearance of activists continue in spite of the National Peace Accord and subsequent bilateral agreements. There is a method in the nature of these occurrences that points to the overt and covert involvement of the State apparatus.

Participants in this gathering will of course know that it was against this background that the Boipatong massacre took place. The fateful events of that day, coming as they did against mounting popular despair, led our movement to disengage from CODESA and break off all contact with the Government. It was a decision that we had to take with heavy hearts, at a time when we were left with no option but to act decisively yet peacefully. Even so, massacres and physical harassment continue to be the order of the day, whilst the regime washes its hands and claims innocence. We believe that by now the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the participants in this gathering will have heard reports from the United Nations monitoring group sent to South Africa to observe the unfolding of our campaign of mass action.

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

At this point I should like to crave the Chairman's indulgence in order to make a comment on the mass-action campaign. In spite of the prophets of doom and the attempts of the South African regime to link mass action with violence, over four million workers in South Africa responded to our call and stayed home on 3 August and 4 August 1992 in order to back the demand for peace and democracy now.

Those who chose to close their ears to this message from our people sought to diminish the historic significance of this action, claiming that the stay-away campaign owed its success to the intimidation tactics of the organizers.

No purpose will be served by answering these spurious claims. Suffice it to say that if over the years the people of South Africa have never allowed themselves to be intimidated by an apartheid regime wielding the mightiest military power in ths southern hemisphere, nothing can ever intimidate them. At any rate, as some observer noted, if the ANC and its allies were to succeed in intimidating over four million workers, then it would have to be admitted that the alliance wields power beyond imagination.

We can only hope that the Pretoria regime will have taken note of the people's message, which was eloquently expressed as they proceeded to vote with their feet.

In our situation, mass action remains the main weapon left to pressure the Government to accede to our democratic demands as listed in our National Executive Committee statement of 23 July 1992. The centrepiece of the demands is the speedy installation of an interim government preceded by the ending of violence. Only then can we suggest that the Nationalist Party and its government are beginning to behave sincerely.

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

The prevarication and scheming on the part of Pretoria have not affected our resolute determination to forge ahead to a new, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. They have only delayed the process, sadly, at the cost of thousands of lives. The attainment of a united, peaceful, democratic order remains the main plank of our strategy. Our inclusivist policy, which derives from our desire to negate the exclusivist, racist approach of the apartheid system, remains unshaken.

We come to the United Nations, as we have in the past, to call for the international community to act swiftly and effectively in pressuring Pretoria to act in conformity with the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa and other consensus resolutions by, amongst other things, promoting a climate conducive to free political activity.

In this regard, we wish to take this opportunity to caution those Member States that seem to be displaying overzeal in establishing ties with the South African regime. Such an approach, as recent developments in South Africa have aptly demonstrated, can only embolden the regime to continue to resist the acceptance of the consequences of democracy and thus delay the much-needed democratic transformation.

On this day we cannot end our presentation without calling the attention of this body to the millions of women struggling for justice in other parts of the world. We salute the women of Western Sahara and express the hope that the speedy implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions will usher in peace and stability in that region. We greet the heroic women of Palestine, whose valour and determination have always been a source of inspiration to us. It is our fervent hope that the process of negotiation

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

currently under way will bear fruit and that at the end of the day there shall emerge an independent Palestine. Likewise, we dip our banner to the gallant women of El Salvador, who, like us, have endured numerous hardships and made many sacrifices.

On this day we appeal to the international community to give some thought to the plight of the women and children of the war-torn regions of the world, who, as they struggle to survive the ravages of war, are forced to contend with the monsters of famine and disease. We call upon the world body to intervene more resolutely in Somalia and elsewhere in order to end the prevailing conditions of famine and misery which constitute a blight on the human conscience.

Turning back to our own situation, we of the ANC believe that the impasse at CODESA II, accentuated by, among other questions of constitutional procedure, discord over voting percentages in the new parliament or assembly, is in truth and in effect a dispute about the nature of democracy itself. It is more than a crisis of interpretation. It is essentially about whether South Africa will experience democratic change or stay pinioned to racist minority veto powers. In this regard, the position of the African National Congress is explicit. The path forward must lead the country to a genuine and full-fledged democratic State without any racial, religious or gender discrimination.

I believe that the Chairman already has the four reports that have been prepared by various people. Thus, my report should be seen in the context of those four reports.

(Ms. Mompati, ANC)

The first one is a report on hostels, fortresses of fear. It is an investigation into hostels by the independent board of inquiry into informal repression, and therefore gives an independent overview of what happens in the hostels. The second one is the consolidated report on the Reef violence put out by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE). It is prepared by Dr. David Everatt, Deputy Director of CASE. The third report is one by the Human Rights Commission. This is a summary report on repression and massacres. The fourth report contains affidavits on the much-spoken-about AK-47s. All these deal with the violence in South Africa and are by independent people, not the ANC.

In conclusion, allow me to add that we trust that we shall leave New York carrying a message of hope for the millions of beleaguered South Africans, and that on our arrival at home we shall be able to say to the people: "Let us labour on. The world is fully behind us".

The CHAIRMAN: I now invite Ms. Ellen Mothopeng, representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), to make a statement.

Ms. Mothopeng is currently President of the African Women's Organization, the women's wing of the PAC. She has dedicated most of her life to the improvement of the situation of women and children in South Africa, in particular in such areas as education and socio-economic development. Ms. Mothopeng participated in the Soweto uprising.

Ms. MOTHOPENG (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)): On behalf of the struggling, dispossessed and exploited people of Azania, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the custodian of the people's genuine aspirations, wishes to thank the Special Committee against Apartheid for its continued observance of this Day.

(Ms. Mothopeng, PAC)

This Day of Solidarity with the struggle of women in Azania - a country colonially called South Africa since 20 September 1909 by a statute of the British Parliament - gives us the opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to the apartheid and colonial situation experienced by the indigenous African majority. Our people has been denied the right to self-determination and independence by the settler colonialists.

Azanian women derive strength from the solidarity of others. We consider ourselves as part of a broad struggle which comprises all of Africa and all of progressive humanity. We would be negligent if we did not honour the women who have paved the way for our struggle. Their leadership and sacrifice give our movement its majesty. Their example has set for all women in oppressed situations a reason to hope and strive for liberation.

The African women in Azania, like their menfolk, have played a historic role in the struggle to liberate our country from colonialism and racism. To mention but a few of the heroines: on this day in 1956, the Azanian women led and challenged the neo-Nazi, racist settler Prime Minister of South Africa, J.D. Strydom. Our oppressors called Strydom the "Lion of the North", but our women proved on this day that Strydom was a paper lion.

We honour many dynamic women, such as Mmaphoshodi Molapo, popularly known as the "Duchess of Africa". She taught us to be uncompromising over land ownership and majority rule in Azania. Mamiki Mohanoe, a journalist, waking up among corpses at the Sharpeville massacre, invoked the attention of the international community to this unprovoked killing of Azanians. Cecelia Lwana and Comrade Nomatyeketyle were convicted for their underground fund-raising activities for the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. Boniswa Ncukana died for all Azanian women, a freedom fighter shot dead on the borders of Lesotho by the racist South Africa regime on 10 March 1985 with five male comrades.

(Ms. Mothopeng, PAC)

Urbania Mothopeng was brutally tortured and kept awake for long periods of time in detention without trial. We salute, from the rural areas to the cities, mothers who have sacrificed and lost their children, like Mrs. Vulindlela, who lost four sons in one day - four sons in one day. Widows like Mrs. Masamola, Mrs. Pokela, Mrs. Shoba, Mrs. Sobukwe, and scores more who lent their husbands to our struggle because they believed in the total liberation of Azanians.

The history of women's struggle does not begin or end at the borders of our country. It extends to our neighbouring sister African countries, which have been a source of inspiration to our women in Azania. There was the legendary Nehanda of Zimbabwe. Queen Nzinga of Angola defied a Portuguese colonial governor. When asked to return the Portuguese prisoners she had captured in war, she agreed provided that all the Angolans who had been carried to Brazil as slaves were brought back in exchange. There was Queen Nefertiti of Egypt; there was Amina of Nigeria; and there was Queen Kandake of Moroe, who led African troops against Roman soldiers and drove them out of Africa and lost an eye in battle. Queen Manthatise fought in the wars of resistance in Azania.

The situation of women in Azania demands special attention. It is common for a woman to relate this scenario:

> "The police took me to the 'dark room'. They forced me to take off my dress ... Fifty lashes to my body ... poured petrol over me ... one of the police urinated on my face ... They talked about setting me on fire if I did not talk ...".

If these gruesome fragments sound familiar, it is because you have heard them before. The unspeakable barbarism that calls itself the new South Africa

(Ms. Mothopeng, PAC)

continues today. It is in this fairy tale of euphoria that the regime would have the international world believe there is so-called change in South Africa.

This "change" that continues to harras women and kill innocent Africans in trains, buses, and townships indisciminately is not change in the eyes of African women. Security Council resolution 554 (1984), of 17 August 1984, declared the 1983 apartheid constitution "null and void". This illegal regime decadently maintains the status quo while talks of reforms give apartheid a new face and poverty a new victim, and perpetuate our landlessness, in which 87.3 per cent of our land is in the hands of the white minority. Azanian women are not prepared to enter the twenty-first century as slaves in their own country, where 50 per cent of African families live below the poverty line. The recent immigrants from Eastern Europe are taking away our jobs and given the citizenship that we, the owners of this land, are denied.

(Ms. Mothopeng, PAC)

This disadvantages us economically. We are not going to allow this regime to exacerbate the psychological scars and further amputate the arms and legs of our children. We are not going to live in fear, barricaded in our homes, while the referendums and the deceitful diplomacy the settler regime shuttles around the world, while genocide, drought and human suffering prevail in our country.

The test of the quality of life in all societies is indeed the treatment of women. Azanian women want the international community to know that there is no change in South Africa. Genocide is the order of the day in apartheid South Africa. Our infants, youth, workers, peasants and women are in constant mortal combat with the South African regime. Massacres of African people are escalating. It was as recently as 17 June 1992 that more than 51 unarmed, non-violent women, children and men in Boipatong were massacred. An 85-year-old grandmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Ndamase, a 9-month-old baby, Aaron Mathope, and several pregnant women were among the victims of this genocide.

Mr. De Klerk announced reforms and unleashed an unprecedented wave of violence; more than 12,000 people have died since 2 February 1990. Those who support this regime call this "black-on-black" violence. Fifteen Africans die every day in South Africa, and this does not include those who are unaccounted for. The lives of women and children are threatened by the regime's use of death squads and mercenaries, such as Buffalo Battalion 32, Koevoets trained in the tactics of killing indiscriminately and instilling fear in our families.

Dr. Gluckman, a pathologist, has revealed that of the 200 autopsies he has conducted, in 90 percent of the cases the victims were assaulted by the police. The objective of this genocidal violence is to reduce the number of

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Africans. This neo-Nazi regime has a strategy to perpetuate apartheid and colonialism in our country, and it implements this strategy through the sterilization of African women. Contraceptive drugs banned in developed countries because of their adverse side-effects - threatened and spontaneous abortions, sterility and death - are being forced on Azanian women. A white nurse has boasted of performing 60 unconsented tubal ligations a week in order to render our women infertile. Askaris infected with the AIDS virus are transported to our townships so that they will spread AIDS through sexual intercourse with our women.

Azanian women demand the immediate implementation of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in South Africa. Azanian women's human rights are being grossly violated by this racist regime. We are enraged that the international community would believe the myth that there is change in South Africa.

To this day the perpetrators of the Holocaust in Hitler's Germany continue to be hunted. These Nazi death-masters are being brought to justice many years after they committed their crimes. The Azanian women are not willing to suffer this holocaust, and the 49 massacres that have taken place in the past two years cannot be allowed to reoccur. Our sons and daughters are butchered in broad daylight; their blood cannot flow unchecked forever. Azanian women will not allow this regime to respond to domestic opposition or resistance by killing, torturing and indiscriminately imprisoning our people to maintain this ruthless and imperialist colonial system. We demand that the rights and interests of the Azanian people prevail over those of the white settlers - an alien minority - since Azania belongs to the Azanians by right of first occupation.

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South Africa is the last bastion of colonialism in Africa. A literal interpretation of the rights against murder and torture would say that they protect people from the evils of death, excruciating pain and total loss of freedom. It is obvious that in South Africa murder and torture are the means of ruling the African people through terror. The world watches with studied complacency and pious condemnation while apartheid, the twin sister of Nazism, rears its ugly head in similarly calculated defiance of humanity. And this oppressor is applauded for its "new South Africa"! The premature lifting of sanctions and the renewal of diplomatic, economic and political ties empower and help bolster this regime.

It is flagrantly insensitive to pressure the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) to negotiate in CODESA - a Conspiracy for Deception by South Africa - at gunpoint with this murderous regime while our people die on a genocidal scale. PAC women want the total cessation of violence among the African people. Our slogan is "Peace Among the African People". The PAC has initiated an attempt to mediate between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party based on this belief.

CODESA is a fraudulent creation of the South African regime. We want to warn the international community about this monster, used not only to destabilize liberation movements and create sectarianism but also to break down the unity of Africans. We warn against this co-option, collusion and collaboration to further oppress us. PAC rejected CODESA I and CODESA II.

Azanian women want a situation that is conducive to raising our children, a situation that protects human rights and preserves and unifies our entire nation. They want a country where we have the right to vote and participate instrumentally in the policies that affect us. We want quality care and education so that we may contribute effectively to our people. We want the

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redistribution of our land, promised to us as early as 1936, and natural resources for our people so we can implement programmes that will alleviate the current drought situation. We are demanding the return of our land.

The United Nations Charter unambiguously states that self-determination is the inalienable right of every nation on the face of the Earth - the right to determine one's destiny. Azania is no exception. Apartheid must not be reformed; it must be totally eradicated, and a completely new society must emerge. We need a new captain to steer the ship. We need opportunity for all our people, not just for whites or the fortunate, but for us all. The neediest in the squatter camps, homelands and rural areas deserve the most help. We need De Klerk to get prepared to make an exit and for the African people to usher in an era of total liberation.

When the regime approached the PAC for negotiations, the PAC stated its conditions. The principal one is that the PAC should negotiate the modalities of establishing a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, and that any negotiations should take place under a neutral convener, a neutral chairmanship and at a neutral venue.

Azanian women want to re-emphasize that CODESA is the most divisive factor among African people today. A letter dated 22 January 1992 to the PAC Secretary-General from the South African Council of Churches says that

> "CODESA's legitimacy as an organ to finally prepare a Constitution which can galvanize unity and stability for this country is increasingly being put into question by those who argue for representation ... We therefore exhort you to formulate a mechanism whereby ordinary people will elect and mandate their representatives to a forum in which the future of this nation will be worked out."

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It is a blatant manipulation of facts for the international community to base the future of our country on a deception called CODESA. The women of the Pan-Africanist Congress do not subscribe to a so-called interim government controlled by the South African racist regime; nor do we hold that the mere establishment of an interim government is tantamount to profound and irreversible change in South Africa warranting the international community's normalizing relations with South Africa. This regime has a notorious record of reneging on agreements, such as the release of all political prisoners. CODESA has no mandate to create a new constitution, whether interim or final.

Azania, colonially called South Africa, was never decolonized by Britain. Therefore, our national sovereignty is still usurped. We have never had our right to self-determination. The South African regime has no sovereignty in our country; the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity would not be interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign State if at our invitation they were to supervise and conduct the negotiations and internationally verify and guarantee agreements between the oppressed majority, which the PAC represents, and the minority, which is represented by the South African regime.

Azanian women want to stress that the way forward for our liberation is to refuse to give legitimacy to a forum which is designed to frustrate our legitimate goal of liberation. We reiterate that the way to independence - and we invoke the aid of the international community in support - is through the following proposals: democratic elections for a Constituent Assembly to draw up a new, democratic constitution must be held without delay; the regime must concede, beforehand, that the only legitimate and democratic forum for transfer of power and the creation of a new constitution is a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of one man, one vote on a common voters' roll in

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a unitary State, the delegates thereto having been elected by proportional representation; a negotiating forum should be convened and chaired by a neutral and independent facilitator and mediator; and a new, restructured forum, free of the defects of CODESA, should be convened in order to facilitate negotiations in good faith and with the primary purpose of transferring power to a democratic majority.

The situation in South Africa demands fundamental change. The women of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania are calling upon all Africans to return to the United Patriotic Front so that the oppressed and dispossessed majority can speak and act with one, powerful voice. The Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania regards unity as the key to paving our way to national liberation and self-determination.

The international community has a role to play in the Azanian women's struggle: they must support all liberation movements. The tradition of lending support to certain groups creates divisions that break down the unity of our people, and this should come to an end.

The women of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania support the people of occupied Palestine, who have been ridiculed and expelled from their homeland by imperialist manoeuvres. We support the struggle of the Palestinian women as they work to recover their dignity, independence and the right to self-determination.

Azania without majority rule would be like a bridegroom without a bride, like a baby without oxygen. On this occasion, when the international community stands with Azanian women in solidarity, we are awakened by the voices of our heroines speaking courage to us. They are telling us that the time is right in the history of Azania for our people to throw off the

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shackles of colonialism and boldly to assert our God-given right to be free of this racist, colonial oppressor. Our founding mothers and fathers taught us to know that, whereas others may help us in our struggle, in the final analysis we are our own liberators.

The CHAIRMAN: I now invite Mr. Muin Shreim, representative of the Observer Mission of Palestine, to make his statement.

Mr. SHREIM (Palestine): The Palestine Observer Mission to the United Nations is proud and honoured to be here today expressing its solidarity and sisterhood with the women of South Africa in their struggle for a non-racial, democratic South Africa.

Women in South Africa have suffered a tremendous amount of repression and exploitation as a result of apartheid. This suffering has manifested itself in their imprisonment, in the destruction of their family units, in physical and psychological torture, in economic repression and poverty, and in disease caused by the lack of health care. In essence, the policy of apartheid denies the black majority in South Africa the basic elements of human rights, not to mention the denial of their right to self-determination.

It is because of this racist policy that women in South Africa did not remain silent: they took to the streets, protesting the atrocities committed against their people; they became an active and integral part of their national liberation movement; they organized themselves as women; and, hand-in-hand with their brothers, they involved themselves in trade unions and took up the issues of their struggle in all its aspects, be it social, economic or political. Women in South Africa are very well aware of the fact that, in order to gain their freedom as women, their people as a whole have to be free.

(Mr. Shreim, Palestine)

Needless to say, the Palestinian women are also suffering the cruel and harsh conditions of the illegal and racist occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel. Israel, the occupying Power, continues to occupy the Palestinian territory and continues to exercise its racist and inhuman practices against Palestinian people. Israel's behaviour is not only in direct violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949, but is also in violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We know the similarity between the Israeli occupation and the racist regime of South Africa, and how harsh their measures against our peoples are. Women in South Africa and Palestinian women continue to hold their heads up high while struggling for freedom and self-determination. But for how long is the international community going to continue watching them suffer without taking specific action to eliminate and end their sufferings? The women of Palestine wonder why, of all the Security Council resolutions pertaining to the question of Palestine, not one has been implemented. Israel, the occupying Power, has not abided by any of the Security Council's resolutions, and has not been reprimanded for its defiance of the will of the international community.

(Mr. Shreim, Palestine)

The black majority in South Africa has made big strides in their struggle against apartheid and the racist regime of Pretoria. However, the illegal apartheid system still remains. Apartheid, like occupation, is the disease, and the international community should take action to dismantle it once and for all. The time for the international community to act is now, in order to help the people of South Africa and the people of Palestine to attain self-determination, independence and freedom.

In closing, the Palestine Liberation Organization, on behalf of the Palestinian people, extends it solidarity with the women of South Africa and hopes that peace and justice will prevail not only for both our peoples, but also the world over.

The CHAIRMAN: That brings us to the end of the speakers' list.

I would like to inform participants that the Special Committee has received messages from Heads of State or Government, Ministers or Secretaries for Foreign Affairs or other Government officials from the following Member States: Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. Messages were also received from the following organizations: the Women's International Democratic Federation and the World Federation of Trade Unions.

I suggest that, in accordance with previous practice and taking into account the usual financial implications, the texts of those messages be published in a document of the Special Committee against Apartheid.

If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As we have come to the end of our solemn meeting today, I would like to express my appreciation and that of the Special Committee to our South African guests and other speakers for their contribution to the successful conclusion of this solidarity meeting.

Despite the encouraging developments in South Africa, women and children remain the most vulnerable group of the black population still suffering from the remnants and legacy of apartheid. But as we witnessed today, they are very determined to take their destiny in their own hands and share an equal space with men in the processes towards and in a new democratic and non-racial South Africa. In that vein, the international community will stand on their side and lend the much needed support to them.

I would now like to invite participants to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of those women and children who were victims of apartheid and have sacrificed their innocent lives in the fight for a South Africa free of that menace to mankind.

The participants observed a minute of silence.

The CHAIRMAN: Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to invite all participants here to join the members of the Special Committee in the panel discussion this afternoon which will be devoted to a more in-depth study of some of the issues raised this morning. We shall meet in Conference Room 6 at 2.30 p.m., and listen to some of the participants who have come specially from South Africa to enrich our discussions.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.